

Message Text

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73

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DOTE-00 TRSE-00 PA-04 PRS-01

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----- 109730

R 211410Z JUN 74

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3321

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG 0618

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJ: RAISES FOR RAILWAY WORKERS

1. IN ANNOUNCING 12.5 PERCENT (R111 MILLION) INCREASE IN BASIC WAGES AND SALARIES FOR SOUTH AFRICA'S 230,000 BLACK AND WHITE RAILWAY WORKERS JUNE 19, TRANSPORT MINISTER MULLER SAID HIS DEPARTMENT WOULD BE UNABLE TO ABSORB COST WITHOUT RAISING RAIL TARIFFS "IN DUE COURSE". HE ALSO SAID " IN AWARDING THE WAGE IMPROVEMENTS AND THE IMPROVED HOLIDAY BONUS, EFFECT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE ACCEPTED POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO NARROW THE WAGE GAP BETWEEN WHITES ON THE ONE HAND AND COLOURED, INDIAN AND BANTU ON THE OTHER." HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, PROVIDE EXPLANATION OF HOW WHAT APPEARS TO BE STRAIGHT ACROSS-THE-BOARD INCREASE WILL HAVE EFFECT OF NARROWING RATHER THAN WIDENING WAGE GAP.

2. JIMMY ZURICH, PRESIDENT 20,000-MEMBER ALL-WHITE RAILWAY ARTISAN STAFF ASSOCIATION WHICH HAD BEEN REQUESTING 25 PERCENT WAGE AND SALARY INCREASE (WHILE HOPING FOR SOMETHING OVER 15 PERCENT) SAID UNION MEMBERS WOULD BE EXTREMELY UNHAPPY WITH 12.5

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PERCENT) SAID UNION MEMBERS WOULD BE EXTREMELY UNHAPPY WITH 12.5

PERCENT WHICH MEANS NEW BASIC WAGE FOR WHITES OF R360 RATHER THAN REQUESTED R400. HE SAID HE AND UNION EXECUTIVES WOULD MEET WITH RAILWAY GENERAL MANAGER LOUBSER FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS JUNE 20.

3. COMMENT: RAILWAY ARTISAN STAFF ASSOCIATION IS ONE OF MORE ELIGHTENED UNIONS IN ALL-WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR (CONFED). DURING PAST SEVERAL YEARS IT HAS QUIETELY GONE ALONG WITH REPLACING WHITES WITH BLACKS AS SUPPLY OF FORMER HAS PROVED INADEQUATE TO RAILWAYS' NEEDS FOR SKILLED AND SEMI-SKILLED LABOR. QUID PRO QUO, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN COMPENSATORY WAGE INCREASES FOR WHITE TRADE UNION MEMBERS AND UNION "BEEF" NOW IS THAT 12.5 PERCENT INCREASE SIMPLY NOT GOOD ENOUGH GIVEN PRESENT RATE OF INFLATION.
DEGRACE

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